

Washington State Board of Health

Policy & Procedure

Policy Number: 2001-001

Subject: Identifying, Monitoring, and Communicating With The Legislature About Legislation Relevant to the State Board of Health

Approved Date: January 10, 2001 (revised December 9, 2002)

Policy Statement:

It is the policy of the Washington State Board of Health to monitor and communicate with the Legislature on proposed legislation that:

1. Has a direct impact on the Board's statutory powers and duties;
2. Runs counter to the Board's intent or direction as stated in existing rule;
3. Is directly related to one of the Priority Topics established by the Board each biennium, as supported by a Board-approved work plan, interim document, or final report; or
4. Is directly related to a policy issue addressed in the "Sense of the Board on Legislative Policy Issues," which is to be developed by the Board prior to each legislative session.

Lead Responsibility:

The Senior Health Policy Manager will have lead responsibility under the supervision of the Executive Director to assure compliance with this policy and procedure.

Procedure:

Prior to each legislative session, the Senior Health Policy Manager will monitor policy issues that are likely to come before the Legislature that session that have any bearing on the Board's broad statutory authority, its rule making activities, or its Priority Topics. A list of these issues will be presented to the Board for discussion at its December meeting. The members may choose to adopt a statement that provides a sense of the Board on likely legislative issues. The statement should indicate a Board member authorized to represent the Board for each policy area.

During session, all Board staff will routinely monitor legislative bill introductions, committee agendas and other legislative matters. The Executive Director, the Senior Health Policy Manager or another designated Board staff will attend all Department of Health bill reviews. Board staff will use this information to develop and maintain a matrix on bills of interest to the Board on the Board's Web site.

This matrix will include:

1. Bill number
2. Prime sponsor
3. Status
4. Brief digest
5. Brief summary of the Board's potential interest
6. Any planned action the Board or its members may have directed staff to take.
(The most common expected action is "monitor")
7. The Board staff monitoring the bill
8. The Board member(s) most interested in the bill

Board staff will meet by phone and/or in person weekly to review, update and revise the matrix. The Senior Health Policy Manager will update the matrix weekly by COB each Thursday.

Process:

Upon identification of a bill that ***contains a provision that conflicts with the Board's existing authority*** in a way that will duplicate state agency efforts, or complicate state programs, the following action should be taken by Board staff, in consultation with the Executive Director:

- Prepare a letter for the Board Chair's approval notifying the relevant House and Senate committee Chairs of the problem and suggesting a technical solution.

Upon identification of a bill that ***contains a policy or programmatic change that may advance or run counter to the Board's intent or direction as stated in existing rule***, Board staff, in consultation with the Executive Director, should take the following action:

- Bring the matter to the attention of the Board Chair and the Board member who sponsored the rule in question via e-mail. Include options and a recommendation on what action, if any, is needed by the Chair or Sponsor on behalf of the Board.

Upon identification of a bill that ***contains a policy or programmatic change that may advance or run counter to the intent or direction of the work of Board or one of its subcommittees within a Priority Topic***, as established by a Board-approved work plan, interim document, or final report, the following action should be taken by Board staff, in consultation with the Executive Director:

- Bring the matter to the attention of the Board Chair and the appropriate Subcommittee Chair (or, if no subcommittee exists, the Board member sponsoring that Board Priority Topic) via e-mail. Include options and a recommendation on what action, if any, is needed by the Board.

Upon identification of a bill that ***contains a policy or programmatic change that may advance or run counter to the intent or direction of the Board as established in the “Sense of the Board on Legislative Policy Issues,”*** Board staff, in consultation with the Executive Director, should take the following action:

- Bring the matter to the attention of the Board Chair and the member authorized to represent the sense of the Board via e-mail. Include options and a recommendation on what action, if any, is needed by the Board.

The Executive Director or a Board Member must approve correspondence with legislative staff or members. Such correspondence should routinely be copied and sent to the Office of the Secretary – Policy, Legislative, and Constituent Relations.

Responsibility for Communicating with the Legislature:

An individual Board member may speak or write to the Legislature on a particular piece of proposed legislation or other matters. In such cases, the speaker should clarify that such communications are from a single Board member or a group of Board members, but do not necessarily reflect the views of the entire Board. A Board member may communicate his or her views on Board letterhead and may ask Board staff to help communicate his or her views if and only if the communication is consistent with the policy and process stated above.

The Board Chair may speak or write to the Legislature or its staff recommending a specific amendment or other action on proposed legislation on behalf of the Board, so long as the Chair believes such position is generally consistent with the wishes of the majority of the Board. At the direction of the Chair, the Executive Director or any Board staff may transmit or delivery such communications.

PDC Reporting:

Any Board member or Board staff member who addresses comments to the Legislature or its staff on proposed legislation ***relating to the Board*** must report such activity to the Board’s Senior Health Policy Manager who must prepare a consolidated quarterly report on such activity as required by the Public Disclosure Commission according to 42.17.190 RCW.